



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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House and Senate Pass Budget Resolution That Calls for Massive Medicaid and Tax Cuts

On Thursday, the House of Representatives [passed](#) the GOP's Fiscal Year 2025 budget framework, with a 216-214 party-line vote. Only two Republicans, Reps. **Victoria Spartz** (IN) and **Thomas Massie** (KY), joined all Democrats in rejecting the resolution. The Senate [approved](#) the framework earlier in the week, with a 51-48 party-line vote. Sen. **Rand Paul** (KY) and all Senate Democrats voted no.

The blueprint calls for slashing at least \$1.5 trillion from programs like Medicaid and food assistance to fund \$1.5 trillion more in tax cuts for wealthy Americans and corporations. Now that both chambers have passed the framework, House and Senate committees will draft legislation for a single, unified reconciliation package of tax cuts, spending cuts, energy policy, border security investments, and new military spending.

House Republicans plan to finalize the bill by late May which will only require a simple majority of 51 Senate votes to pass.

However, multiple Republican senators [expressed concerns](#) against deep cuts to Medicaid this week, including **Susan Collins** (ME), **Josh Hawley** (MO), **Jim Justice** (WV), **Jerry Moran** (KS), and **Lisa Murkowski** (AK).

"It's disgraceful to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy by terminating health care and food assistance for older and working Americans," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Please stay tuned for more developments on this spending package and be prepared to contact your members of Congress about this bad plan."

SSA Backs Down on Plan to End Phone Service for Millions After Public Outcry

On Tuesday, the Social Security Administration [reversed](#) its decision to end telephone services for processing benefit claims. Americans can continue to apply for retirement, survivor, or disability benefits through the method that works best for them—whether by phone, in person, or online.

Beneficiaries will only be required to verify their identity in person if they are flagged as potential fraud risks.

“Organizing and mobilizing works. From the moment DOGE announced its dangerous plan to eliminate SSA telephone services, our members sprang into action—making thousands of calls to elected officials, organizing rallies and demonstrations, and demanding the protection of the services they have earned and paid for,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We will continue to fight to ensure that SSA is fully staffed and that local field offices remain open and accessible to the public.”

Take Action: [Click HERE to tell your senators to vote NO](#) on Frank Bisignano to be SSA Commissioner.

The Social Security Administration is reeling from **Elon Musk**’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) staff cuts that are threatening its ability to serve the public. **Frank Bisignano**, who calls himself a “DOGE guy,” is the wrong person to lead the SSA. Please [take action](#) and tell your senator to vote NO on his confirmation.

Alliance Releases New Congressional Voting Record

The Alliance [released](#) its 2024 [Congressional Voting Record](#), which scored each U.S. Senator and Representative on critical retirement security issues, on Thursday.

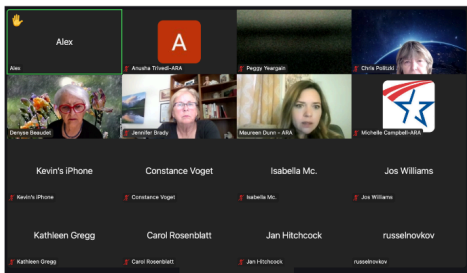
“Most members of Congress pay lip service to protecting seniors,” said President **Roach**. “Our annual voting record shows which House and Senate members back up their words with actions and vote in older Americans’ best interests.”

The report assesses ten key Senate and House floor votes from 2024 that relate to older Americans. These include votes to ensure that 2.8 million public sector retirees and survivors receive the full Social Security benefits they’ve earned, to fund nutrition and health care programs that older Americans rely on, and to lower prescription drug prices.

“What House and Senate members do—or fail to do—in Washington has consequences for retirees and their families,” said Executive Director **Fiesta**. “We will continue to track what our elected officials do so voters have the information they need.”

Among the lawmakers earning a score of 90% or higher were **Ben Ray Luján** (NM), **Jon Ossoff** (GA), **Josh Harder** (CA), **Jahana Hayes** (CT), **Frank Mrvan** (IN), **Gabe Vasquez** (NM), **Dina Titus** (NV), **Marcy Kaptur** (OH), and **Emilia Sykes** (OH).

Both the national 2024 Congressional Voting Record and individual reports for each state delegation, as well as past voting records are available on the [Alliance’s website](#).



Top left: Florida Alliance Member Barbara DeVane joins protestors at the Hands Off rally in Tallahassee; Top right: Texas Alliance members hold a “Hands Off Social Security” rally in Dallas; Middle left: Michigan Alliance President Jim Pedersen holds a “No Social Security Cuts” sign at a rally in Niles; Lower left: Alliance members joined our “Save Social Security” phone bank on Thursday; Lower right: A California Alliance member stands with Rep. George Whitesides (CA) at “Hands Off” rally

KFF Health News: Rural Hospitals Question Whether They Can Afford Medicare Advantage Contracts

By Arielle Zionts

Rural hospital leaders are questioning whether they can continue to afford to do business with Medicare Advantage companies, and some say the only way to maintain services and protect patients is to end their contracts with the private insurers.

Medicare Advantage plans pay hospitals lower rates than traditional Medicare, said Jason Merkley, CEO of Brookings Health System in South Dakota. Merkley worried the losses would spark staff layoffs and cuts to patient services. So last year, Brookings Health dropped all four contracts it had with major Medicare Advantage companies.

“I’ve had lots of discussions with CEOs and executive teams across the country in regard to that,” said Merkley, whose health system operates a hospital and clinics in the small city of Brookings and surrounding rural areas.

Merkley and other rural hospital operators [in recent years](#) have enumerated a long list of concerns about the publicly funded, privately run health plans. In addition to the reimbursement issue, their complaints include payment delays and a resistance to authorizing patient care.

But rural hospitals abandoning their Medicare Advantage contracts can leave local patients without nearby in-network providers or force them to scramble to switch coverage.

[Read more here.](#)